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# Composition and Communication

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON  
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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# *The Problem of Freshman English In the Liberal Arts College<sup>1</sup>*

KARL W. DYKEMA<sup>2</sup>

To determine the problem peculiar to freshman English in the liberal arts college it is first desirable to state the purpose of freshman English in general. The barest formulation of a statement of that purpose would be that the course should stimulate and assist the student to a more accurate, logical, and effective expression. But an expression of what? A liberal arts college presumably provides a liberal education, and that, again, presumably liberates the spirit, develops the critical capacity which leads to intellectual independence. If we add this function of liberal education to the earlier statement, the purpose of freshman English could be put thus: the course should stimulate and assist the student to a more accurate, logical, and effective expression of concepts which lead to the development of critical capacity and intellectual independence. This seems to me the primary purpose of freshman English, and a purpose which must never be lost sight of.

But there is a secondary purpose which is often more delicate and difficult to deal with: the achievement of mastery of the mechanics of expression. Mechanics of expression, it must never be forgotten, is concerned solely with conventions, conventions often of a quite arbitrary sort, the learning of which may prove most irritating to an original and adventurous spirit. The conventions are of two sorts: those

which have to be formally learned for writing only, i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization; and those which may have to be formally learned for both speaking and writing, i.e., the conventions of correct English. The learning of this second set of conventions is, to be sure, necessary only for those whose linguistic heritage is not standard English. The presentation of these mechanical aspects in a liberal arts college is peculiarly difficult. Literature has for thousands of years been the principal means of liberating the human spirit; in our educational system literature means primarily English; but English also means mechanics. The student for whom the mastery of mechanical detail is markedly unpleasant—and he is often one with a fine mind—may therefore develop an antagonism towards everything associated with English. An injudicious presentation of the mechanics of English may inadvertently lock away the treasures of literature from a student who particularly needs them and could benefit most richly from them. And the sad corollary must not be forgotten: since it is so easy to emphasize the mechanics, even to the extent of making it an end in itself, English majors are all too frequently those dull creatures whose sole qualification is that they are human machines that can spell, punctuate, and capitalize as if they were animated dictionaries and handbooks combined.

I have by now mentioned three problems facing the teacher of freshman English. The first is to get the student to recognize that he must conform to

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the 1950 conference of the CCCC, meeting at the Hotel Stevens, Chicago, March 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Youngstown College, Youngstown, Ohio.

the established conventions of spoken and written English. The solution to this problem usually involves pointing out to him his departures from established practice and aiding him in avoiding those deviations. The second problem is to keep ever-present in the minds of student and instructor that the primary purpose of the course is to improve the quality of the student's expression; the solution to this problem involves working out a grading method which will penalize the student for both mechanical and rhetorical inadequacies but will reward him only for rhetorical excellence. The third problem is to prevent the necessary insistence on mechanical competence from destroying the student's potential interest in writing and in literature.

Of these three problems, the third is peculiarly that of the liberal arts college. A hundred years ago American higher education, if not predominantly literary, was certainly far more concerned with literature than it now is. Today it is certainly quite safe to say that American higher education is non-literary, even in the liberal arts college. It is the special problem of freshman English in the liberal arts college to see that the course is so conducted that it will meet its proper objectives and yet not discourage students from electing courses in literature.

The professional schools do not have this problem because the student there has little chance to elect courses. The professional courses are so numerous that what little room is left in the curriculum for other subjects must be rigidly allotted according to the educational philosophy of the professional school. It is in the liberal arts college that the student has the greatest chance to explore the treasures of literature under expert guidance.

The great difficulty, then, lies in the presentation of mechanics. I am teaching, let us say, a course in oral and written composition. In it there are three students whom I shall identify as X, Y, and Z. X is a clever boy whose parents are intelligent, well-educated, articulate. He has heard a great deal of stimulating discussion at home, and he has taken part in it. He talks like his parents, i.e., intelligently, effectively, and in standard English; but his spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are atrocious. His memory for such details is bad; he talked his way through high-school English, and he is rather surprised to discover now that I view his written work with alarm. His oral work is, of course, excellent.

Student Y is at least as intelligent as X, but comes from a totally different background. His parents are immigrants and speak a foreign language at home. Y did not learn English until he entered grade school, and then he got it mostly from his school fellows, whose English was substandard. But he soon became an omnivorous reader and an extremely conscientious student. His mastery of written mechanical detail is considerable, and he adds to it a long established habit of constant reference to the dictionary and handbook. But his speech is deplorable. When he delivers a prepared talk, there are few errors in it, to be sure, but there is the artificiality which characterizes all second-language speech. And his extemporaneous speech is full of mispronunciations and substandard forms. He is surprised that I view his spoken English with alarm, for his high school teachers, dealing mostly with students of his background, were elated at his intelligent and careful written work and ignored the inadequacies of his spoken language.

Student Z is a girl of mediocre capacity. I make Z a girl because the mediocre boy seldom possesses even the few abilities she does. She too comes from a home where English is standard, but if her parents are stimulating and articulate she shows no evidence of it. She has a good memory for detail, and she is conscientious. Her written work is mechanically satisfactory, and the same can be said of her speech. But she cannot be stimulated to a more accurate, logical, or effective expression of anything because she has nothing important to express.

If I now ask X, Y, and Z to write an evaluation of the minor tempest created by *Stromboli*, I shall get a well-reasoned personal reaction from X and Y; X's discussion is interesting and easy to listen to as he reads it aloud, but difficult to wade through on paper; Y's is the reverse, painful to hear, but easy to read because of the absence of distracting mechanical errors. Z's discussion, on the other hand, undigested paraphrases of other people's opinions, is perfectly correct and perfectly dull.

Here I have a difficult and delicate situation. It would be easy to fail X and Y. I might have set up an arbitrary rule that five misspelled or mispronounced words would automatically mean failure. X and Y could not deny that they had misspelled or mispronounced more than that number. But it would be hard to persuade Z that she too deserves failure, for she is too stupid to realize that she has failed to do what was required. Yet it is Z who does not matter, X and Y who do. Z will ultimately vegetate her life away as an excellent typist, preferably for X, who sorely needs her, though strictly in a stenographic capacity. X and Y do matter. They must be made to see that, painful as it may be for them, they must master the mechanics that have hitherto eluded them. Yet at the same time they must be kept from associating that painful process with literature and the realization of the values that literature can offer. Since my assignment is to state the problem, not to solve it, I offer no suggestions for a solution.

The freshman course in the liberal arts college must recognize this difficult and delicate problem and deal with it understandingly and sympathetically. Otherwise our speech and English majors are going to include too many Z's, and ultimately speech and English departments will be staffed by harmless, dull, unimaginative nonentities.

# *The Problem of Freshman English In the University*<sup>1</sup>

ADOLPHUS J. BRYAN<sup>2</sup>

I trust you will not think it unusual that, as a person who for many years has tried, perhaps with doubtful success, to direct a university program in Freshman English, I should regard as the Freshman English problem peculiar to universities the difficulty of maintaining an adequate and competent staff. I hasten to assure you that I have not considered this a discovery of my own, nor do I think it will be new to any of you. I was present at our conference last spring and heard Dean Ashton's speech on the subject, and, like all of you, I have been more than mildly aware of the problem for many years. I shall admit also that the problem exists in varying degrees of seriousness in all institutions. I am convinced, however, that there are special circumstances in a university which contribute to the seriousness of the problem there.

Those of you who heard Dean Ashton's speech will remember that the crux of our problem as he sees it is that most teachers who enter the field of English look upon composition as a necessary evil to overcome on their way to the goal of literature teaching. I quite agree. Such an attitude of mind is, it seems to me, somewhat more likely to prevail in a university than elsewhere; for in addition to the lure of sophomore courses in literature and a few advanced undergraduate courses, there is also the added

attraction of a greater number of advanced courses and of graduate courses.

Hopes for escape from freshman composition are brighter here for the young Ph.D. He knows, moreover, that these latter escapes are not likely to come because he does a good job of teaching composition. He knows that he can escape from composition teaching most quickly through promotion, and a smooth highway to promotion and the goal of advanced courses is paved with so-called scholarly articles. Measuring scientifically the quality of a person's teaching requires a more delicate set of balances than educators have yet devised. Certainly the growing practice of resorting to student ratings is not the answer. Measuring the value of research is equally difficult perhaps, but we have adopted a means of measurement; we merely count the articles or pages and maybe note mentally whether they appeared in PMLA or whether they were published in the "Letters to the Editor" section of the local newspaper. The young instructor, I should say, is a little on the dull side if he does not manage a score of articles out of his doctoral dissertation—almost enough to make him eligible for an associate professorship if he hasn't dropped into a faculty unusually hale.

I plead that you will not misconstrue what I say to mean that I have a Swiftian contempt for research. As one interested in the reputation of our English faculty, both at home and away from home, I certainly would lend encouragement to research; but as a Chairman of Freshman English, I should say that

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the 1950 conference of the CCCC, meeting at the Hotel Stevens, Chicago, March 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



there are perhaps on every staff men who ought to be forbidden the opportunity, for they produce at the price of neglect of their freshman teaching. And I do insist that we need to give more attention to the evaluating of composition teaching itself quite apart from other teaching or research, and that we reward substantially such good teaching as we find, without regard for the amount of research accomplished. Dean Ashton, I believe, did not consider failure to reward the teacher of composition the fundamental difficulty in maintaining an adequate and competent staff. Perhaps it is not. We might experiment. Who knows? With assurances of rewards we might be able to find that small core of permanent staff members whose major interest is composition—a part of the suggested solution presented by Dean Ashton.

There is another aspect of the problem of maintaining an adequate and competent staff in a university, an aspect which is peculiar to the university, I believe. I have in mind the use of graduate students in large numbers to take over the teaching of classes in Freshman English. Thus Freshman English becomes one of the main supports for the advanced undergraduate and graduate program in a university, first, because in most institutions the hiring of teaching fellows for a freshman course reduces the per capita cost of instruction in the whole department to a figure that won't frighten the dean, and secondly, because the creating of jobs for prospective graduate students furnishes easy justification for the stipends with which we lure these students to graduate school. Per capita cost of instruction is important, especially in a state-supported institution; for no matter how expensive the operation of certain parts of the program proves, the

administrator can always point to the low per capita cost to show really how economically the department is being run. It is surprising how cheaply even a department of English, which must restrict enrollments in its freshman classes severely, can operate when a sizable amount of the elementary work is put into the hands of teaching fellows. Thus usually it is Freshman English which pays the bill for expensive advanced courses. Say what we will, our actions indicate this conviction: that if not the best teaching, certainly the least harm can result from putting the inexperienced graduate students in charge of Freshman English, and, besides, it's cheap.

Someone may rush to the defense of the student teacher with the assertion made by one of the speakers at our conference last year that "some of our best teaching of composition comes from assistants who are properly directed and who see in this teaching a chance to prepare themselves for fuller responsibilities of full-time positions after they have completed their graduate work." Some of the best teaching is done by graduate assistants under proper direction, sometimes without any direction. But my experience has taught me that the over-all quality of teaching done by graduate assistants declines as the number of such teachers increases. The kind of assistants which the speaker had in mind do not come in dozens or half-dozens or even in pairs, but in singles and not too often at that. Even the best of assistants finds the temptation to neglect his teaching for his graduate course work too strong to resist. He knows that his success in his graduate work is too important for him to gamble with. Better gamble with muddling through his teaching, he reasons. And why shouldn't he reason so?

The Ph.D. and the recommendation of those under whom he has studied will blot out the effect of any adverse comments from those who know about his teaching.

The presence on a Freshman English staff of young Ph.D.'s, a large number of graduate assistants, and some teachers of long experience creates problems of administration. Each of these groups needs some supervision if the course is to escape chaos. The young Ph.D.'s will, perhaps, need more than they will want to take. The graduate assistants will, no doubt, need more than one can give them. And the seasoned teachers will want little and perhaps may resent what they get. Thus the director of the program is tempted to submit each group to a different kind of supervision—day-to-day assignment syllabus for the graduate assistants; fairly detailed outline for the young Ph.D.'s; perhaps

the barest sketch for the seasoned teachers. But such a scheme often results in very different kinds of work and, unless controlled by uniform examinations, leads to very different standards.

For this last problem of the staff, as well as for the others I have mentioned, I have no solution. The invitation was to present the problem, not to furnish the solution. I would welcome more discussions of the kind we heard last year from Mr. Wells on the Michigan plan, a plan also discussed by Mr. Rice in *College English* some years ago. I should say that the success which university departments of English have in settling the problems common to us all will depend to a large extent upon the solution of the problem of maintaining a staff who are competent and, equally important, the majority of whom have a genuine interest in teaching composition to freshmen.

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## Darkness Is Still King: A Reply to Professor Lloyd

MARTIN STEINMANN, JR.<sup>1</sup>

If the sentiments expressed in Mr. Donald J. Lloyd's recent article<sup>2</sup>—and I say "sentiments" advisedly—were fresh, I should not trouble to reply to it. Nor should I if they had often been publicly recognized as sentiments and nothing more. But they have been reiterated so often, so righteously, and at such tedious length—and, so far as I know, without being challenged—that I am moved to reply. I wish that I could be as shocked by his article as he is by Mr. Kenneth L. Knickerbocker's<sup>3</sup>. But I cannot; the best that I can manage is exasperation.

I should like to begin by remarking that, though I have read Fries, Marckwardt, Baugh, Bloomfield, Sturtevant, and Pooley and am familiar with the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Linguistic Atlas of New England*, I am no linguistic scientist; and that nothing that I shall say here will in any way depend for its validity upon the findings of linguistic science. I do, however, pretend to some knowledge of logic and semantics; and it is by reference to these disciplines that the validity of my statements must be judged. I shall, in other words, concern myself, not with the *factual* (empirical, cognitive) truth or

falsity of what Mr. Lloyd asserts (when, as he sometimes does, he makes factual assertions), but with the *logical* truth and falsity, and with the *meaning*, of what he asserts. I shall be concerned with the validity of his reasoning and with the kinds of meaning that his assertions have (as opposed to the kind that they might seem, and he thinks them, to have), and not with the facts of usage, whatever they may be or whatever he or Mr. Knickerbocker takes them to be. By way of self-protection, I should, I suppose, add, that, when I speak of logic and semantics, I do not have in the mind the work of the late Count Korzybski and his disciples but rather that of, for example, the Vienna Circle, Russell, Ayer, and Stevenson<sup>4</sup> (though what I say will be so elementary that the work of Aristotle or, at any rate, of Hume would be almost as relevant). And I wish to add also that my present independence of linguistic science and dependence upon logic and semantics should not be taken as expressing a desire to exalt the latter disciplines above the former. I should, on the contrary, like to record my great admiration for the methods and the findings of this science, though, as we shall see, I do have some reservations about the logical validity of some of the inferences that are often made from these findings.

Mr. Lloyd begins his article by making several assertions which will leave no doubt about where he stands, or about the grounds of his criticism of Mr. Knickerbocker's article, and then proceeds to develop these assertions. We had best have them before us:

<sup>1</sup> University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>2</sup> "Darkness is King: A Reply to Professor Knickerbocker," *College Composition and Communication*, II, 1 (February, 1951), 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> "The Freshman Is King: or, Who Teaches Who?" *ibid.*, I, 4 (December, 1950), 11-15.

<sup>4</sup> My debt to the last two is particularly great. See Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (2nd ed.; London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1946) and Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).

1) The Lewis survey<sup>5</sup> is of no particular importance to teachers of English, and gives us no information about usage.

2) The nineteen "disputed expressions" have all been carefully studied and found to be in good use in this country.

3) The language of a person who uses none of these expressions is not superior to the language of one who uses some of them, or, indeed, to that of one who uses all of them.

4) The assertion or implication that the language of a person who uses none of these expressions is superior on that account is a professional error which no English teacher should commit in print, and no editor should permit him to make.

What I should like to point out first is that, though all these assertions have factual meaning, their form is such as to mislead the reader as to the kind and the proportion of this meaning, and, further, that they carry a heavy burden of nonfactual (emotive or affective, and volitional-motivational or directive) meaning as well.<sup>6</sup> I have not the space here for a rigorous demonstration of this contention. What I can do is to put these assertions into forms that roughly suggest the lines that such a demonstration might take:

1) I [that is, Mr. Lloyd] disap-

<sup>5</sup> Norman Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" *Harper's Magazine*, CXCVIII, 1186 (March, 1949), 68-74.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Herbert Feigl, "Logical Empiricism," in *Reading in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), 7.

<sup>7</sup> "I approve of X" (unlike "X, hurrah!" which is emotive or affective, and "Go thou and do likewise!" which is volitional-motivational or directive—statements neither true nor false, factually or logically) is, of course, factual—true if the speaker does in fact approve of X, false if he does not—; but it is not the sort of factual statement that is counted among the statements of science, which consists of statements about X, not about scientists *qua* scientists.

prove of English teachers' approving of the Lewis survey; English teachers, go ye and do likewise! The Lewis survey contains no factually true statements about usage.

2) The nineteen "disputed expressions" have all been carefully studied and found to be in use in the dialect of a certain socio-economic class in this country. I approve of this dialect. This dialect, hurrah! Readers, go ye and do likewise!

3) My approval of the language of a person who uses none of these expressions is not greater on that account than my approval of the language of one who uses some of them, or, indeed, of that of one who uses all of them. Readers, may your approval of the language of such a person be no greater than mine!

4) I disapprove of any English teacher who makes and causes to be printed, and of any editor who permits the printing of, the assertion that the language of a person who uses none of these expressions is superior on that account or any assertion or assertions from which this assertions may be deduced. Readers, go ye and do likewise!

In support of the argument suggested by these analyses, I will criticize two further assertions made by Mr. Lloyd in the development of his first four. To his fourth assertion, Mr. Lloyd later adds this one: "It [that is, the assertion about the superiority of the language of a person who uses none of the nineteen expressions] ranks with the assertion in a professional journal of astronomy or geology that the world is flat." I should like to argue that it ranks with nothing of the sort. Statements of the type "X is superior" (read: "I approve of X. X, hurrah! Go thou and do likewise!") form no part of that body of statements which constitutes astronomy or geology or—indeed, and by definition—any science.<sup>7</sup> Such state-

ments are fit components of Mr. Lloyd's autobiography; they are often found in the discourse of moralists, metaphysicians, propagandists, and Fourth of July orators; and they are sometimes the subject matter of the statements that constitute the sciences of psychology, psychiatry, and sociology. But, if Mr. Lloyd wishes to include them among the statements that constitute linguistic science, he must do so by virtue of a Pickwickian definition of "science;" and, to the extent that he does include them, he must alter the subject matter of this science, abandon its purely factual character, and give it an affective and hortatory component. If Mr. Lloyd wishes to do this—and do it in print—I shall read him, and view the actions of the editor who prints him, without censure. He will, to be sure, have made linguistic science *sui generis* among the sciences; but, if he is skillful in the arts of persuasion, he may win many converts to his new science. "The doctrine of correctness," he goes on to say in his concluding paragraph, "has been so thoroughly refuted by modern students of language that its expression is a mark of ignorance of linguistics." I should like to argue that those statements designated by "the doctrine of correctness" are not of an order that can be refuted by anyone or anything.<sup>8</sup> Such statements are persuasive definitions;<sup>9</sup> and, since definitions are analytically (logically) true whatever facts linguistic or

any other science may uncover, they cannot be refuted.

If I may borrow Mr. Lloyd's manner for a moment—and evince attitudes and attempt to influence people—I might suggest that his assertions are an error which, in view of the remarkable developments in logic which have come about in this century, no English teacher should commit in print (since the rules of logic are rules of language, not "laws of thought"), and are, further, a mark of ignorance of semantics. And I hope that the editor of *College Composition and Communication* will not allow these assertions to bully him.

Surely my point, however mistaken, is now fairly clear. Linguistic science must by definition, confine itself to the three tasks which all sciences confine themselves to: description, explanation, and prediction. Though it can describe certain phenomena of language, it cannot prescribe them. It can give us no basis for judgements about language unless we supply the standard of judgment; its descriptions, in other words, offer us no basis for action—for speaking one way rather than another—unless we supply the purpose. Like all sciences, it can help us get somewhere, but only we can decide where to go. It can, for example, demonstrate that the "socially acceptable"<sup>10</sup> in the United States in 1951 do not say "you was"; psychology can add that our uses of that expression will suggest to the socially acceptable that we are not one of them; and, if our purpose is to improve our social standing (that is, if our standard for judging certain phenomena of language is social acceptability, if we approve of expressions whose use will improve our social standing), we shall do well to say "you were" instead. If, however, in view of other, perhaps conflicting, purposes, we are content to be excluded from the best circles, we shall

<sup>8</sup> It might be argued (though not, I should think, by Mr. Lloyd, and certainly not by me) that they are synthetic *a priori* statements, metaphysical statements about the true natures of things, and hence can be refuted by metaphysical arguments.

<sup>9</sup> On persuasive definitions, see Stevenson, *op. cit.*, ch. ix.

<sup>10</sup> The phrase is Mr. Charles Carpenter Fries' (*American English Grammar* . . . ["National Council of Teachers of English, English Monograph," X; New York: D. Appleton-Century Company Incorporated, 1940], 15).

waste our time in trying to use the latter expression. The statements of linguistic science, then, have precisely the same status as those contained in (say) the Kinsey Report. They are descriptive statements, and from them we can deduce nothing but further descriptive statements. They can set us right on some of the facts of usage, facts that we doubtless should do well to know before undertaking any action relevant to them; but these facts alone cannot tell us what to do about them or what attitude to take toward them.

Linguistic science rightly rejected the old prescriptive grammar, based on the rules of reason and of Latin grammar, as unscientific, and replaced it with descriptive grammar, based on actual observation of language in use. Linguistic scientists—though not, of course (and by definition), *qua* scientists—went on, however, to replace the doctrine of correctness, fashionable among prescriptive grammarians, with the doctrine of usage, the doctrine that, as Mr. Albert C. Baugh puts it, “. . . the most important criterion of language is usage.”<sup>11</sup> According to this doctrine, what we, as speakers and writers of English, ought to do is, first ascertain from observation just what grammatical forms etc. are in use in the dialect of the socially acceptable and, second, to use them in our

own speech and writing. Epigrammatically, what is, is right. The point which I wish to make about this doctrine is that, since it is normative and prescriptive (just as prescriptive as the doctrine of correctness)—since it tells us what we ought to say instead of what we do say—it is not validated by the findings of linguistic or any other science. To count this doctrine as part of linguistic science is precisely analogous to counting the doctrine of white supremacy as part of the social sciences: the social sciences can tell us that many people do in fact believe in white supremacy; but social scientists *qua* scientists cannot tell us that we ought (or ought not) to believe in or act upon this doctrine. What is may well be right; but science can never prove it so, nor can Mr. Lloyd.

What Mr. Lloyd has done, then, is to confuse facts with doctrines—statements of facts with judgments of value, exhortations to action, and persuasive definitions—and, as a result, has made certain inferences unwarranted by logic. Once his doctrines are removed from the purloins of fact, they are, of course, entitled to the same examination and consideration that we give to any appeals to action; but, since I am in this reply concerned with logic and semantics, not with advocating or opposing doctrines, I shall content myself with having recognized his doctrines for what they are, and reserve further comments on them for another article.

<sup>11</sup> *A History of the English Language* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company Incorporated, 1935), 349.

## The N.S.S.C. and the C.C.C.C.

**The report on Group Meeting III at the spring meeting of Conference on College Composition and Communication at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago, March 30-31, 1951.**

*Topic for panel discussion:* What should be the future relationship of the National Society for the Study of Communication and the Conference on College Composition and Communication?

Those who participated in the discussion are officers or executive committee members of the two organizations, or, in one or two instances, substitutes for members who were not able to be present. The discussion was opened by statements of the purposes for which each organization was formed and a brief history of the activities of each organization to date.

John Gerber, representing George Wykoff, chairman of the C.C.C.C., stated that the C.C.C.C. came into being in 1948 when the College English Section of the National Council of Teachers of English, meeting in Chicago, appointed a committee to arrange for a conference of persons primarily concerned with the problems of teaching composition and communication on the college level. The first meeting was held in Chicago in the spring of 1949. The purposes of the organization were stated as follows: (1) to provide an opportunity for discussion of problems relating specifically to the organization and teaching of college composition and communication courses, (2) to encourage studies and research in the field, and (3) to publish a bulletin containing reports of conferences and articles of in-

terest to teachers of composition and communication. The C.C.C.C. is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, membership in the parent organization being a requisite for participation. The treasurer of the N.C.T.E. is also the treasurer of the C.C.C.C., and the editorial board of the bulletin, *College Composition and Communication*, must be approved by the National Council. The annual business meeting of the C.C.C.C. is held at the time of the annual meeting of the N.C.T.E.<sup>1</sup>

James I. Brown reported for Ralph Nichols, chairman of the National Society for the Study of Communications. This organization, an affiliate of the National Speech Association, was formed in 1949. It has no common membership requirement with its parent organization and no officers serving both. Its purpose is (1) to study the nature of the field of communication, (2) to aid in the organization and teaching of communication courses, (3) to evaluate courses being given in colleges and elsewhere, and (4) to disseminate information on the results of studies and investigations being made in the field.

After these introductory statements, the panel proceeded to discuss the following questions

1. To what extent are the purposes of the C.C.C.C. and the N.S.S.C. mutually distinct and to what extent do they overlap?
2. Is overlapping in function and activity so great that a merger is desirable?

<sup>1</sup> For further details of C.C.C.C. objectives and history see *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. I, No. 1 (March, 1950), p. 12; Vol. I, No. 3 (October, 1950, pp. 19-21; and Vol II, No. 1 (March, 1951), pp. 13-16.



3. Is considerable overlapping in function and activity desirable even if merging is not feasible?
4. If a large extent of duplication is not desirable, should it be materially reduced before the structure and practices in the two organizations become firmly patterned?
5. Can such reduction of overlapping be effected by cooperation so that the good of both our students and ourselves may be furthered?

In considering the first point, members of the panel remarked that, while many colleges still offered freshman composition in the traditional manner, some have expanded the course to include what are now commonly spoken of as the communication skills: writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Further divergence of the two groups was pointed out by a member of the N.S.S.C. who said that the study of communication should be broad enough to include such areas as communication in industry; public relations; government, community, and military communications; religious speaking and dramatics; media of mass communication and propaganda; intercultural relations; communication within the family group; clinical methods in speech disorders; general methodology of communication; as well as studies in reading and listening comprehension. The speaker stated that seventeen standing committees in the N.S.S.C. were studying the above and additional areas in the communication field, which has been made increasingly important by the complexities of modern living. Further discussion made the point that many of the studies currently being conducted by the N.S.S.C. are in the nature of research, whereas the C.C.C.C. concerns itself primarily with the teaching of the communication skills. Further-

more, membership in the N.S.S.C. might include, in addition to those teaching composition, radio script writers, magazine editors, writers of advertising copy, and persons working in the field of speech therapy—persons whose basic training had been in such areas as speech, journalism, psychology, or education, while membership in the C.C.C.C. includes primarily those who are teaching composition and communication in colleges concurrently with specialization in literature and linguistics. Hence, it appeared that, while there is some general agreement in objectives, in actual practice there is wide divergence.

Before going on to the third and fourth questions, the chairman took a poll to find out how many in the panel and in the audience belonged to both organizations. As might be expected in view of the sponsorship of the meeting, most of those present were members of the C.C.C.C. However, a considerable number felt that it was worth while to belong to both organizations. If both serve a useful purpose, and each included some areas of emphasis not included in the other, does the expense of supporting both and the time taken by active participation in both impose any hardship? Mr. Hatfield's terse comment "There are already too many organizations" expressed the feeling of many, but a number present said they would continue to endorse both.

A discussion of the possibility of reducing the overlapping through a closer cooperation of the two organizations brought the suggestion that a committee be appointed to make a study of the matter. This suggestion was followed by the proposal that the officers of the two organizations constitute such a committee. After considerable examination of the proposition, during which members of the audience as well as members of the panel expressed their opin-

ions, it was concluded that authorizing a committee to carry on a study and make recommendations would only be further duplication, inasmuch as there already exists a high degree of cooperation and mutual friendliness. The combined panel for an exchange of ideas and a clarification of purposes and objectives which was included in the program of the current meeting of the C.C.C.C. was recognized as only one of a number of ways in which the two organizations can work together, and the lively discussion showed that differences in approach to the common

problem can be both challenging and stimulating.

No agreement was reached on any of the other suggestions contained in the agenda, such as the desirability of holding conventions in common, conducting a common summer workshop, publishing a single bulletin, or reducing the cost of belonging to both organizations by a dual membership. The conclusion reached by the panel was there was too much difference between the two organizations to make a merger practical and desirable, but that a high degree of cooperation was already in evidence and should be further encouraged.

#### *Participants in Group III Panel*

##### *Chairman:*

D. P. McKelvey, Stanford University

##### *Recorder:*

Edith E. Layer, Western Reserve University

##### *Panel Member:*

Harold B. Allen, University of Minnesota

T. A. Barnhart, State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota

Paul W. Barrus, East Texas State Teachers College

William T. Beauchamp, State Teachers College, Geneseo, New York

James I. Brown, University of Minnesota College of Agriculture

Glenn Christensen, Lehigh University

C. Rexford Davis, Rutgers University

Clyde W. Dow, Michigan State College

Beverly E. Fisher, Santa Monica City College

Max Fuller, Grinnell College

Josiah Geist, Wright Junior College, Chicago

John Gerber, State University of Iowa

W. Wilbur Hatfield, Sec.-Treas. N.-C.T.E.

Frieda Johnson, Peabody College

Kenneth L. Knickerbocker, University of Tennessee

James H. Mason, Arkansas State College

Elwood Murray, University of Denver

Charles Roberts, University of Illinois

Waters Turpin, Morgan State College, Maryland

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